

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, reexamination and further and favorable reconsideration of the subject application in light of the following remarks, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. § 1.112, are respectfully requested.

As correctly indicated in the Office Action, claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Applicants note with appreciation that priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 has been acknowledged.

By the foregoing supplemental amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 11 have been amended to further clarify Applicants' invention. Specifically, in the Amendment filed on August 19, 2002, the claims were amended to recite the separation of plasma from blood or buffy coat fraction, in the preamble of the claims. By way of the present Supplemental Amendment, the claims are amended to recite the buffy coat fraction in the main body of the claim as well. The claims are further amended to clarify that the present invention is directed to the continuous purification of leukocytes using a filtered buffy coat fraction.

Applicants reserve the right to pursue in a continuation or divisional application any subject matter canceled by way of this amendment.

Support for the amendments to the claims can be found in the claims as filed and throughout the specification, especially on page 4, line 22 to page 5, line 27 (discussing the filtration process with the buffy coat fraction in detail, as well as the purification of the leukocytes), page 6, lines 33-34 (disclosing that human blood is

preferred for use with the present invention) and Example 1. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. However, if any issues remain outstanding after consideration of this Amendment and Reply, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned so that prosecution may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marked-Up Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 11

1. (Twice Amended) Process for the continuous purification and concentration of leukocytes [separation of plasma] from blood or from a buffy coat fraction, characterized in that said process comprises the following steps:

- (a) separating plasma from the blood or from the buffy coat fraction by filtration in order to achieve a filtered buffy coat fraction;
- (b) adding an aqueous solution, which is hypotonic in relation to plasma, to the filtered buffy coat fraction resulting from step (a), in order to achieve lysis of erythrocytes contained in the filtered buffy coat fraction;
- (c) mixing the filtered buffy coat fraction and the aqueous hypotonic solution from step (b) in a mixing device;
- (d) leading the mixture from step (c) through a retention vessel;
- (e) leading the mixture from step (d) through a centrifuge in order to separate the leukocytes;
- (f) collecting the separated leukocytes from step (e).

2. (Twice Amended) Process according to claim 1, characterized in that the process is for continuous purification and concentration of leukocytes from a buffy coat fraction[, obtained from blood, is used instead of blood in step (a) and plasma is removed from this buffy coat fraction by filtration], wherein step (a)

involves separating plasma from the buffy coat fraction by filtration in order to achieve a filtered buffy coat fraction.

4. (Twice Amended) Process according to claim 1, characterized in that the filtration is performed by leading the blood or the buffy coat fraction through a membrane filter with a pore size in the interval of 0.1 - 1.0 μm .

5. (Once Amended) Process according to claim 4, characterized in that the filtration is performed by leading the blood or the buffy coat fraction through a membrane filter with a pore size in the interval of 0.4 - 0.6 μm .

11. (Amended) Process according to claim 1, characterized in that the blood or the buffy coat fraction is derived from [is] human blood.